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Identical letters dated 1 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Ever since the events in the Syrian Arab Republic began, the country has affirmed that armed groups are killing innocent persons in order to arouse citizens' sentiments and make cheap gains at the regional and international levels. However, the parties that were responsible for arming those groups have denied this ever since the events in Syria began. The use of arms by those groups has resulted in the deaths of more than 2,000 Syrian law enforcement officials and the destruction and burning of dozens of public and private facilities as well as oil and gas pipelines and railway cars.

In response, it was necessary for the competent Syrian authorities to take appropriate measures in order to protect innocent citizens and ensure their safe movement and the safety of their property, as well as to preserve the prestige of the State and its institutions, as any other State would do. When the State fulfilled the obligations incumbent upon it, certain Arab and Western parties with ties to those armed groups launched baseless attacks, openly declaring material and political support for the terrorist actions of those groups. Those parties attempted to vilify the Syrian Arab Republic and mobilize international public opinion against it, including by convening countless sessions of the League of Arab States, the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The League of Arab States Observer Mission verified the existence of those armed groups and established that, instead of adhering to the Arab plan of action, they were firing on law enforcement forces, destroying public and private facilities and targeting innocent persons. Thereupon, unfortunately, the League withdrew its observers in order to hide the truth and circumvent its own resolutions. The decision not to submit an official version of its report to the Security Council at the appropriate time is the greatest evidence that the League has disavowed its resolutions and lost credibility.

Syria was not surprised when the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia and the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, speaking in the course of and after the conclusion of what the Syrian people have dubbed "The Enemies of Syria conference", which was held in Tunis on 24 February 2012, stressed the importance of arming the Syrian opposition. They were, unfortunately, supported by the representatives of several Western States and by the Secretary-

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General of the League of Arab States himself. In that connection, Syria would like to affirm that the arming of the opposition is not a recent development but began a long time ago. The resolutions that the League of Arab States and the General Assembly have adopted are merely a smokescreen for their illegal support, which violates the Charter of the United Nations, the Charter of the League of Arab States and international law, and runs counter to friendly relations among Arab countries. The question that those parties must answer is: when did terrorism and bearing arms become an integral part of being an opposition?

Those who are interested in the welfare of the Syrian people and wish to see them enjoy freedom and democracy must, firstly, have freedom and democracy in their own countries and, secondly, be concerned with human welfare.

Syria affirms that terrorism cannot be characterized as self-defence, and would like to draw attention to the opportunism of certain States, which claim to be fighting global terrorism even as they are arming terrorists in Syria and other parts of the world. The prevalence of such a notion will undermine all efforts to counter terrorism and crime. Syria holds those States that are supporting the activities of terrorist groups in its territory responsible for all loss of Syrian lives. Certain neighbouring States have helped terrorists to acquire weapons and have hosted and trained them in their territories. Such actions are contrary to good-neighbourly relations, will have disastrous consequences for the region and will cause those States to pay dearly for blindly pursuing such policies. The creation of a military office by the Istanbul council with a view to managing its military operations against Syria from a neighbouring country is further evidence of the terrorist nature of the opposition, which is now in plain view.

Lastly, Syria affirms that it continues to press forward with national dialogue, which is the only means of resolving existing problems. It furthermore affirms its commitment to the continuation of the reform process, which recently culminated in the endorsement by the majority of Syrians of the new Constitution. The Syria of the future will be built on this new Constitution, which provides for a multiparty political system, free elections and respect for the ballot box. Syria hopes that the members of the Security Council that respect the Charter of the United Nations, which calls for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, will not permit the adoption of any resolutions that authorize aggression against States, subvert State sovereignty and independence, and undermine efforts to maintain regional and international security and peace.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic
to the United Nations